

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 PC-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

/068 W

-----091745Z 098971 /53

O R 091712Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5334

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE FREETOWN 1475

ABIDJAN FOR AMBASSADOR SAMUELS AND SEITZ

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PINS, PINT, SL

SUBJ: SIERRA LEONE ELECTION RESULTS

REF: (A) FREETOWN 1436, (B) FREETOWN 1450

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: RULING ALL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS (APC WAS RETURNED TO POWER FOLLOWING SIERRA LEONE'S FOURTH GENERAL ELECTION WITH 74 SEATS TO OPPOSITION SIERRA LEONE PEOPLE'S PARTY'S (SLPP) 15 SEATS, AMID MANY COMPLAINTS OF RIGGED NOMINATIONS AND UNFAIR ELECTIONS FROM SLPP SUPPORTERS. ELECTIONS IN BO DISTRICT WERE POSTPONED TO STILL UNANNOUNCED FUTURE DATE LEAVING EIGHT SEATS STILL TO BE DECIDED. EXCEPT FOR NUMEROUS SMALL DISTURBANCES AT POLLING PLACES, ELECTIONS TOOK PLACE

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IN GENERALLY CALM ATMOSPHERE. TWO FORMER APC MINISTERS AND ONE APC DEPUTY MINISTER WERE DEFEATED BY SLPP OPPONENTS. UNIVERSITY STUDENTS HAVE RETURNED TO CLASSES AND SIERRA LEONE LABOR CONGRESS MEETS LATER IN WEEK TO ISSUE STATEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1973 THE RULING APC WILL BE FACED

WITH AN OPPOSITION PARTY IN PARLIAMENT COMPOSED OF AT LEAST 15 MEMBERS OF THE SLPP, INCLUDING FORMER SLPP MINORITY LEADER SALIA JUSU-SHERIFF. THE SLPP CONTINGENT IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE WHEN ELECTIONS ARE HELD IN BO DISTRICT AND MAY INCREASE FURTHER FOLLOWING HIGH COURT DECISIONS ON PETITIONS REGARDING NOMINATION IRREGULARITIES. ELECTIONS IN BO WERE ABRUPTLY CANCELLED FOLLOWING DISTURBANCES THAT RESULTED IN THE DEATHS OF AT LEAST SEVEN PEOPLE (REFTEL A), ALTHOUGH MANY SPECULATE THAT THE ELECTIONS WERE POSTPONED TO PERMIT THE APC TO MASS SUPPORTERS AND ISU TO INTIMIDATE THE LARGELY PRO-SLPP POPULATION OF THE DISTRICT.

3. EXCEPT FOR NUMEROUS FIST FIGHTS AT POLLING PLACES OVER CONTESTED VOTERS OR IN ATTEMPTS TO INTIMIDATE INDIVIDUAL VOTERS, THE ELECTIONS WERE HELD IN A GENERALLY CALM ATMOSPHERE. THUS FAR, AT LEAST, WE HAVE HEARD NO REPORTS OF SERIOUS VIOLENCE. UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AT FOURAH BAY COLLEGE RETURNED TO CLASSES MORNING OF MAY 9. REPORTEDLY THE STUDENTS FEARED THAT A PROLONGATION OF THEIR SIT-DOWN STRIKE (REFTEL A) WOULD RESULT IN THE LOSS OF A YEAR'S ACCREDITATION.

4. COMPLAINTS ARE BEING VOICED WIDELY THAT ELECTIONS WERE NOT FREE AND FAIR AND THAT THE ELECTION OF THE 36 UNCONTESTED APC PARLIAMENTARIANS WAS RIGGED, BUT SO FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE THERE IS NO MOVEMENT UNDERWAY TO PROTEST THE RESULTS, EXCEPT THROUGH THE COURTS. HOWEVER, SEVERAL KNOWLEDGEABLE SIERRA LEONEANS HAVE CAUTIONED THAT BO DISTRICT REMAINS A HOT SPOT AND IF VIOLENCE BREAKS OUT WHEN ELECTIONS ARE HELD IN THE DISTRICT IT COULD SPREAD TO FREETOWN AND THROUGHOUT THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SOUTHERN AND EASTERN DISTRICTS.

5. TWO FORMER MINISTERS, J.C.O. HADSON-TAYLOR, MINISTER OF HEALTH, AND DR. MOIWO KORJI, MINISTER EASTERN REGION, LOST THEIR BIDS FOR REELECTION, AS DID FORMER DEPUTY MINISTER OF HEALTH, BRIMA COMBEY. THUS FAR, SIX FORMER MINISTERS, AND ONE FORMER DEPUTY MINISTER AS WELL AS 43 OTHER FORMER PARLIAMENTARIANS EITHER DID NOT GET NOMINATED OR ELSE LOST THEIR BIDS FOR REELECTION. THE OUTCOME OF THE BO DISTRICT ELECTIONS SHOULD ADD MORE TO THE LIST.

6. SIERRA LEONE LABOR CONGRESS HAS NOT COMMENTED ON RESULTS OF ELECTION BUT EXECUTIVE BOARD WILL MEET LATER IN WEEK TO ISSUE STATEMENT. FACADE OF SOLID LABOR COHESION WAS BROKEN BY WEEKEND PUBLICATION OF STATEMENT ISSUED IN NAME OF THREE LARGE UNIONS, MOTOR DRIVERS, AGRICULTURAL TRANSPORT AND GENERAL WORKERS, AND PUBLIC UTILITY EMPLOYEES DISASSOCIATING THEMSELVES FROM THREATENED INDUSTRIAL ACTION IF FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS WERE NOT PERMITTED. WHETHER STATEMENT REFLECTS VIEWS

OF UNION LEADERSHIP OR SOME UNION MEMBERS IS UNCLEAR.

7. PRESS REPORTS THAT FIRST SESSION OF NEW PARLIAMENT WILL
TAKE PLACE THURSDAY, MAY 12, FOR PURPOSE OF SWEARING IN MEMBERS.
NORTH

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